

April 6, 2017



## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN ST. LUCIE ENCOURAGES PREVENTION AND TESTING OF SYPHILIS DURING STD AWARENESS MONTH

**Contact: Arlease Hall**  
[Arlease.Hall@flhealth.gov](mailto:Arlease.Hall@flhealth.gov)  
772-370-1391

**St. Lucie County, FL** –The Florida Department of Health in St Lucie joins the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in recognizing April as Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Awareness Month. Throughout the month, DOH-St Lucie will host and participate in screening and education events. STD Awareness Month is especially important this year as syphilis, which was at one point nearly eliminated, has now resurged. The current number and rate of syphilis cases is higher than it's been in more than 20 years in the United States.

“To prevent the spread of STDs, it is important to remember the 3T’s (Talk, Test and Treat). Talk to you partner and healthcare provider about risk factors and methods to reduce your chances of getting an STD, get tested, and get treated if you’re infected to avoid additional health problems or further the spread,” said Clint Sperber, Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County.

With the recent rise in syphilis infections, it is a renewed health threat for anyone who is sexually active. To prevent the spread of all STDs, including syphilis, DOH-St Lucie provides screening, counseling, treatment and partner notification services to persons infected with or suspected of being infected with STDs.

Syphilis infection rates have spiked in all regions of the country and across almost every ethnicity and age group. Some populations, such as gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men and women are seeing higher increases than other groups. Cases of congenital syphilis (babies born with syphilis) are also increasing at an alarming rate. Having syphilis also makes it easier to get HIV and Hepatitis C.

The only way to avoid syphilis and other STDs is to not have sex. However, if you are sexually active, you can do the following things to lower your chances of infection:

- Be in a long-term, monogamous relationship with a partner who has tested negative for syphilis and other STDs;
- Use condoms the right way every time you have sex;
- Talk to your health care provider about getting testing for syphilis and other STDs or [locate a clinic](#) near you for free, fast and confidential testing;
- If you test positive for syphilis or other STDs, get treated right away and be sure your sexual partner is treated as well to reduce the risk of re-infection.

DOH-St Lucie has planned several outreach events in April for STD Awareness Month:

**Testing is free for STDs and HIV  
No appointment is necessary but a photo ID is needed**

- April 6, Thursday 1:00-3:30PM @ PIONEER PARK IN **FT PIERCE (AVE M AND N29TH STREET)**
- April 11, Tuesday 1:00-3:30PM @ WHISPERING PINES PARK IN **PSL (BEHIND TREASURE COAST HIGH SCHOOL)**
- April 13, Thursday 1:00-3:30PM @ DREAMLAND PARK IN **FT PIERCE (South 25TH AND CITRUS AVE)**
- April 17, Monday 1:00-3:30PM @ SPORTSMAN PARK IN **PSL (ON SW PRIMA VISTA AND NW AIROSO BLVD)**
- April 19, Wednesday 10:00AM-12:00 NOON @ PINWOOD PARK IN **FT PIERCE (SUNRISE BLVD AND US HWY 1)**
- April 26, Wednesday 1:00-3:30PM @ WHISPERING PINES PARK IN **PSL (BEHIND TREASURE COAST HIGH SCHOOL)**

For more information on STD Awareness Month, visit the CDC's [webpage](#). To learn more about the department's STD program and services, click [here](#).

#### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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